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ONLY HUMAN

By Sidney Fields

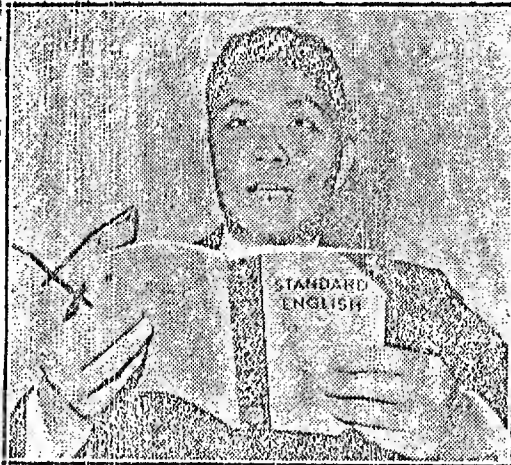
Better Fled Than Red

Tung Chi-ping had to run twice before he could make his defection from Red China stick. By an inexplicable irony, the second time he ran was from the U. S. embassy in Burundi, Africa.

His defection sets some kind of a speed record: Exactly 20 hours and 50 minutes after he arrived in Burundi as a propagandist for the Red Chinese he fled.

"They insist I was kidnapped by the Americans," Tung said, during a stopover here with his friend, Robert Loh, a U. S. Army interpreter.

Earnest, studious, stocky and 24, his name is now Charles Tung. He lives in Washington on a



Charles Tung—not afraid of family reprisals.

stipend from the State Department while he learns English. He is about to enter a school for American citizenship. His hopes are clear now: further study so he can teach French or math in America.

"But the question I dreaded most when I first arrived," he said, "was what I would do with my new-found freedom. In China a college student is only a number. He never knows what his work will be. He is assigned to it after graduation.

His Teachers Punished

His disgust began to ripen when he was 17 and still in secondary school. It was during the period when the Communist overlords invited their subjects to criticize the party for its mistakes. When his teachers did they were promptly branded "rightists" and punished.

"Party members hold teachers in contempt, but we venerate them," Tung said. "Two were kept at school as the doorkeeper and janitor. One was exiled to central Asia. Another was made a railroad laborer and the luckiest was sent to work on a farm."

And he asked his classmates the question that already had a grim answer: "What will happen to their families?"

When he was studying at the Institute for Foreign Languages, the Committee on Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, students were scolded for paying more

attention to their subjects than to party chairman Mao's works. At another point classes were closed and they were ordered to collect all iron doors, iron knobs and scrap metal and work the steel furnace set up in the schoolyard.

"It became a crime to study," Tung said. "But this accumulation of idiocy failed and they sent us back to our books. After I was graduated I went to visit the Institute and the pile of steel we made was still in the schoolyard."

All students are urged to be "Red" first and then experts. Tung never became a party member. But he was graduated from the Institute as a French language expert and sent to Peking for indoctrination.

After six months in Peking he bid good-by to his mother, his father who works in a watch shop in Shanghai, and to his two brothers and three sisters. He was ordered to Busumbura, capital of Burundi, a former Belgian colony where French is the official language, as a cultural attache in the Red Chinese embassy.

'Research'-Intelligence

Tung explained that in Red China's embassies around the world there is always a "Research Office," staffed by picked people from the party's Investigation Department in Peking, headquarters for espionage.

"Research office people hold various diplomatic titles," he added, "but they are rarely, if ever, seen. Their sole function is intelligence work. When necessary, cultural attaches are enlisted to help them."

As soon as he arrived in Burundi he looked for a way to get out. He made it in a quick, surprising way. But wasn't he afraid of reprisals against his family?

"No. Because they still say I was kidnapped and even wrote editorials about it. So they can't hurt the family of a poor victim of the capitalists."

(Tomorrow: Long journey to freedom)